

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE UNDERCOVER AGENT RECEIVES AWARD

Anthony M. Stefano of Arlington, Va., criminal investigator for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, has been presented a \$750 Superior Performance Award by the Department of the Interior, the Department announced today. Stefano was rewarded for his role in obtaining evidence that led to the arrest of 161 persons in 1961 for market hunting activities.

For two and a half years, Mr. Stefano carried out undercover operations in the southeastern region of the United States, gathering evidence by purchasing over 5,000 wild ducks and geese for "friends," while posing as a peanut salesman. During this interval he and members of his immediate family lived under assumed names.

In presenting the award, Bureau Director Daniel H. Janzen said that Mr. Stefano's undercover operations involved great personal risk and the fact that Mr. Stefano was able to conduct them in association with a notoriously unlawful element is a tribute to his skill.

"Especially noteworthy in Mr. Stefano's work was the maintenance of copious and accurate notes on his activities", Director Janzen said. "This permitted him to present firm evidence to the United States Attorneys who handled the cases and to serve as a competent witness in behalf of the Government. Mr. Stefano was able to make positive identification of the offenders and a majority of them pleaded guilty to the charges."

The mass arrests resulting from Mr. Stefano's evidence started at dawn May 5, 1961. Forty-five Federal Game Management Agents from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and State conservation officers from the States involved--Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, and Arkansas--conducted what proved to be the Nation's biggest raid of its type.

This was the fourth market hunting roundup upon which Mr. Stefano has worked, in March 1954, 22 members of a California market hunting ring were arrested on evidence collected by Mr. Stefano, and in April 1956, evidence he had gathered over a two-year period led to the mass arrest of 56 market hunters in the Houston-alveston area in Texas. Then in September 1958, warrants for the arrests of 95 market hunters in the States of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois were issued, again on evidence gathered by Mr. Stefano. As a result of his 1958 activities he received a \$750 Superior Performance Award.

Mr. Stefano was raised in Gilbert, Minn., and was graduated with honors from the College of St. Thomas at St. Paul, Minn., in 1931. While at St. Thomas, he was active in debating and athletics, and was runner-up in the National Collegiate oratory contest in his senior year. Mr. Stefano began his career as an investigator by carrying out certain investigative assignments for the Minnesota Game and Fish Department between 1932 and 1936. He received his law degree in 1938 from the St. Paul College of Law at St. Paul and then was an investigator with the Federal Housing Authority from 1938 through 1941. He was with the War Food administration in Minnesota and Wisconsin during World War II, returning to investigative work in 1950 with the Department of Labor. Mr. Stefano transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service as a criminal investigator in 1952.

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